

**MARVEL**

**004**

**WALKER  
BLAKE  
MENYZ**





While imprisoned for a crime he did not commit, **Luke Cage** was subjected to medical experiments that gave him superhuman strength and bulletproof skin. Once free, he used his abilities to become a Hero for Hire, protecting people who had nowhere else to turn. His mission has taken him to Wakanda, the Savage Land, even Avengers Mansion, but Luke has never forgotten where he came from.

While in New Orleans for the funeral of Dr. Burstein, the man who gave him his powers, Luke's mourning became an investigation into Burstein's suspicious death. With assistant Dr. Lenore Mornay, Burstein had repeatedly used the "Burstein Process" that super-powered Luke on a number of patients: magnate Cyril Morgan's son, KevLar and his gang the Ninth Ward Mafia, and Frankie Corello, who went mad as a result, killed his criminal father, and attacked Luke and Mitchell "Warhawk" Tanner--Burstein's first test subject.

Warhawk was slashed by a Damocles blade, which cuts bulletproof skin and which, unbeknownst to Luke, Cyril Morgan has given to KevLar. Meanwhile, Warhawk, suffering from his wounds and the Burstein Process madness, can only be saved by Burstein himself. Luckily, he's just reappeared, very much not dead...

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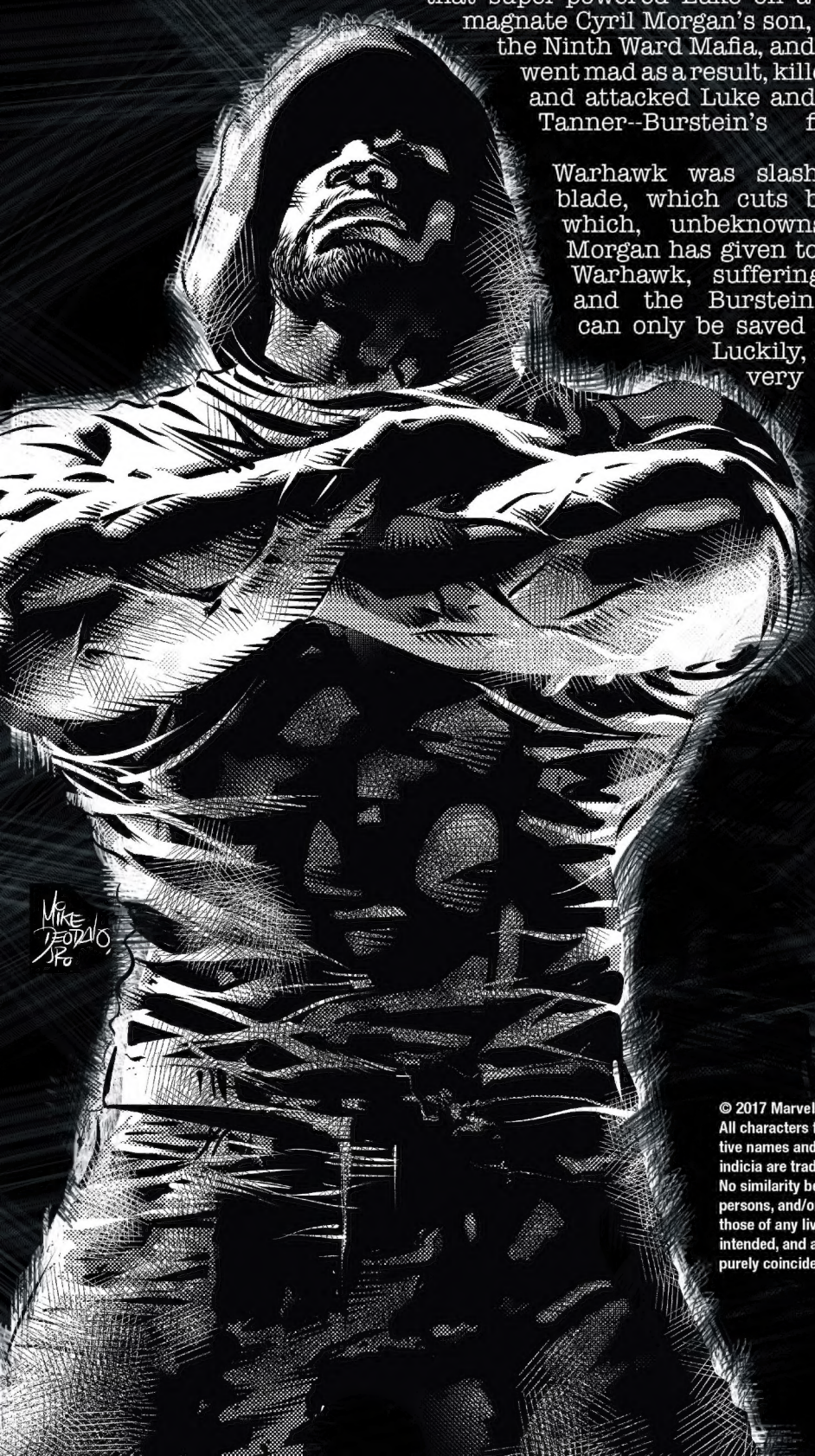
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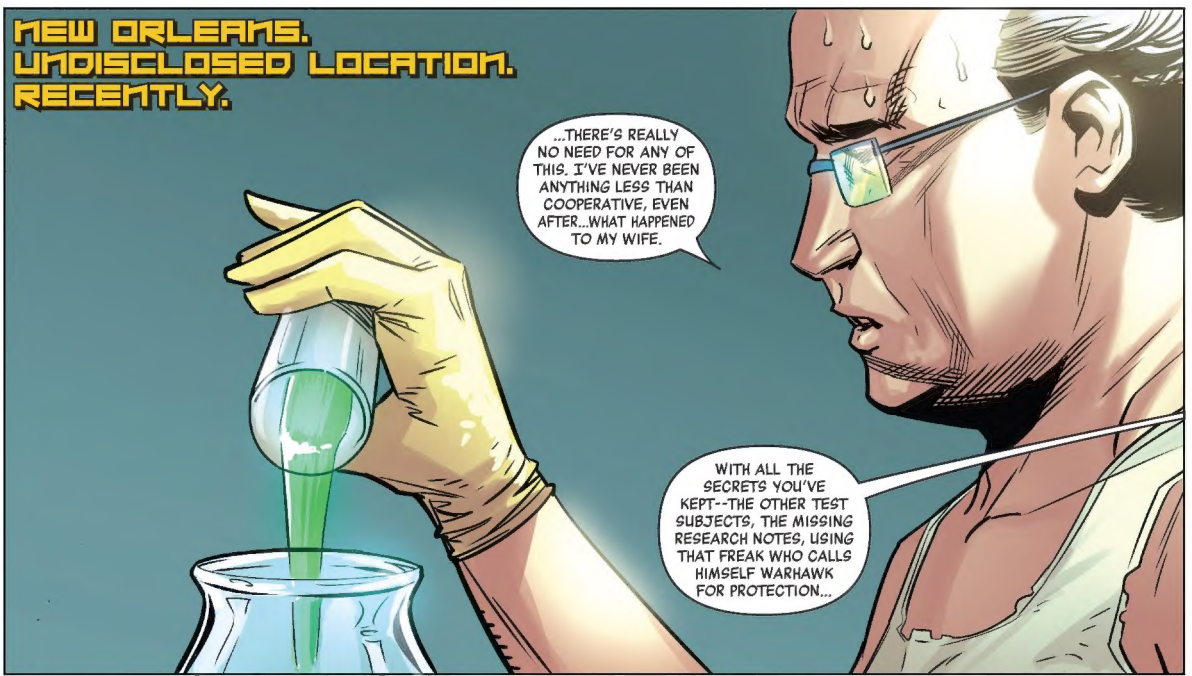
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**NEW ORLEANS.  
UNDISCLOSED LOCATION.  
RECENTLY.**



...THERE'S REALLY NO NEED FOR ANY OF THIS. I'VE NEVER BEEN ANYTHING LESS THAN COOPERATIVE, EVEN AFTER...WHAT HAPPENED TO MY WIFE.

WITH ALL THE SECRETS YOU'VE KEPT--THE OTHER TEST SUBJECTS, THE MISSING RESEARCH NOTES, USING THAT FREAK WHO CALLS HIMSELF WARHAWK FOR PROTECTION...



...YOU REALLY EXPECT ME TO TRUST YOU?

YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT NOT TO TRUST ME.

BUT KEEPING ME LOCKED IN A CELL? AS IF THAT WILL SOMEHOW PRODUCE THE RESULTS YOU WANT?



I'M DOING THE BEST THAT I CAN--WORKING TO UNDO THE MISTAKES I'VE MADE.

MISTAKES I HAVE TO LIVE WITH.

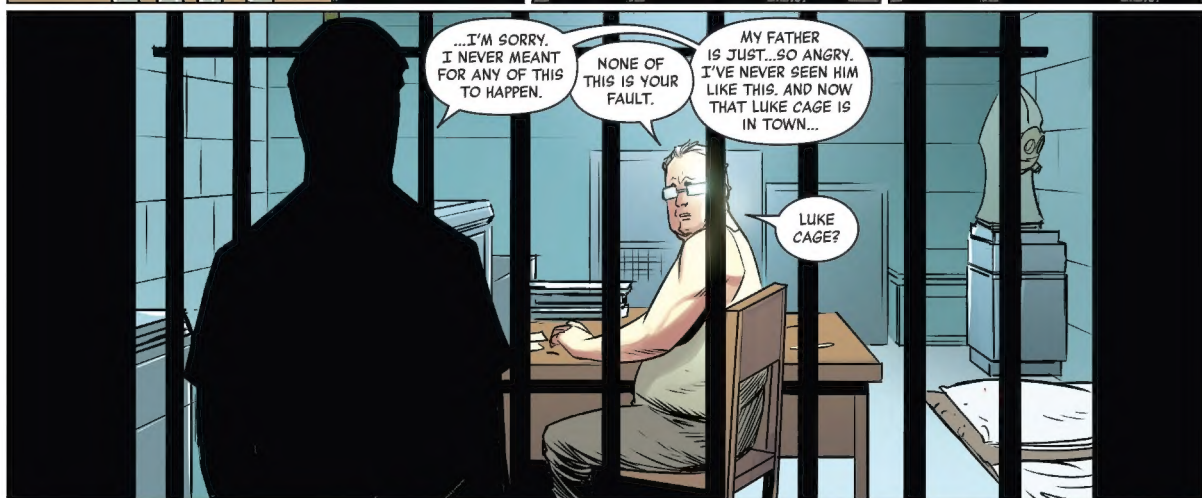
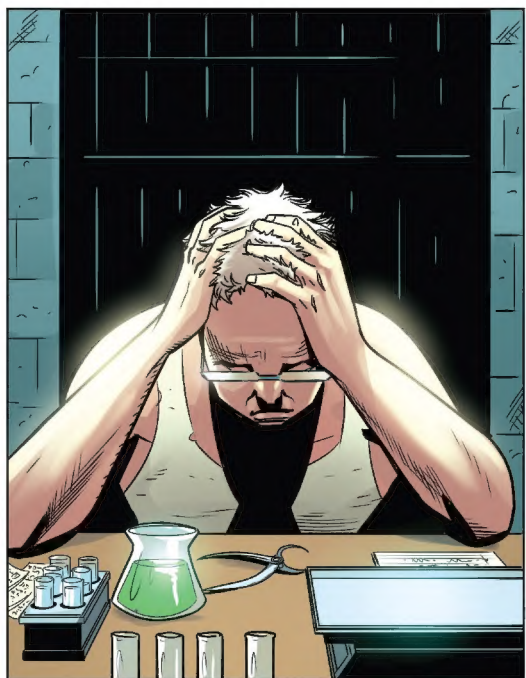
YOUR MISTAKES HAVE COST LIVES--INCLUDING YOUR WIFE'S.

YOUR MISTAKES ARE MY PROBLEM, THEY THREATEN EVERYTHING I HAVE WORKED FOR. TAKE CARE OF YOUR MISTAKES, NOAH...



...BEFORE MORE PEOPLE DIE.







# NEW ORLEANS. NOW.

DID YOU  
CHECK TO MAKE  
SURE THE BLADE  
DIDN'T DAMAGE  
ANY VITAL  
ORGANS?

I DID THE  
BEST I COULD UNDER  
THE CIRCUMSTANCES,  
BUT HE WAS BLEEDING  
OUT. I HAD TO CLOSE  
HIM UP.

**N**OA H BURSTEIN  
IS ALIVE.



HE DIDN'T COMMIT  
SUICIDE. HE WASN'T  
MURDERED.

HAND ME  
THE MOLECULAR  
DESTABILIZING  
SCALPEL.

YOU'RE  
GOING TO  
OPEN HIM  
BACK UP?

I NEED TO  
CHECK THE WOUND  
AREAS FOR INTERNAL  
DAMAGE...



...MITCHELL  
IS MUCH TOO  
VALUABLE OF  
A SPECIMEN.

I'VE PUT  
TOO MUCH WORK  
INTO HIM TO LOSE  
HIM NOW.

HE'S ALIVE, PERFORMING  
EMERGENCY SURGERY ON  
THE FIRST PERSON HE  
EXPERIMENTED ON.

I WATCH HIM. I  
LISTEN TO HIM.

I REALIZE I'VE NEVER SEEN  
THE BIG PICTURE WHEN IT  
COMES TO NOAH BURSTEIN.

AND THAT'S WHEN IT HITS ME--  
HARDER THAN ANYTHING HAS  
EVER HIT ME BEFORE--NOT LIKE  
THE HULK PUNCHING YOU IN THE  
FACE, BUT LIKE THE HULK  
SMASHING YOUR SOUL...



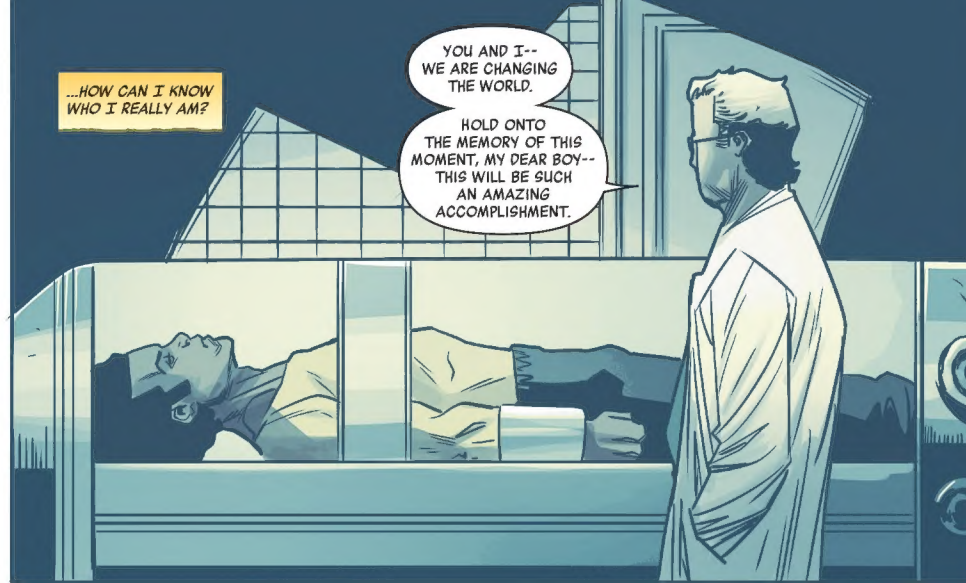




...I DON'T REALLY KNOW NOAH BURSTEIN--  
I DON'T KNOW THE TRUTH OF HIM, JUST  
BITS AND PIECES OF A TRUTH.

THOSE BITS AND PIECES OF  
WHO I THOUGHT NOAH  
BURSTEIN WAS ARE TIED TO  
THE CORE OF WHO I AM.

BUT IF I DON'T KNOW  
THE TRUTH OF WHO  
BURSTEIN REALLY IS...



...HOW CAN I KNOW  
WHO I REALLY AM?

YOU AND I--  
WE ARE CHANGING  
THE WORLD.

HOLD ONTO  
THE MEMORY OF THIS  
MOMENT, MY DEAR BOY--  
THIS WILL BE SUCH  
AN AMAZING  
ACCOMPLISHMENT.



HIS ACCELERATED  
HEALING ABILITIES APPEAR  
TO BE WORKING--I'VE ALWAYS  
MARVELED AT HOW QUICKLY  
THIS ONE HEALS.  
SUCH AN AMAZING  
ACCOMPLISHMENT.

WARHAWK IS ONE OF  
THE CRAZIEST PEOPLE  
I'VE EVER MET...



...BUT HE'S STILL A PERSON.  
TO HEAR BURSTEIN TALK  
ABOUT HIM...

MAKES ME WONDER  
WHAT BURSTEIN REALLY  
THINKS OF ME.



I WILL NEVER  
BE ABLE TO EXPRESS  
HOW PROUD I AM OF  
YOU, LUKE. YOU'RE LIKE  
A SON TO ME.



THANK GOODNESS  
WE WERE ABLE TO  
KEEP HIM ALIVE--  
COULDN'T AFFORD TO  
LOSE THIS ONE.

NOAH, HE  
KILLED FRANKIE  
CORELLO.

UNFORTUNATE,  
BUT CORELLO WAS  
NEVER AS VALUABLE  
OF AN ASSET.

I THOUGHT  
I KNEW...



EMMA, I  
WANT YOU TO  
MEET CARL...I  
MEAN LUKE.

I'VE HEARD  
SO MUCH ABOUT  
YOU--NOAH TELLS ME  
ABOUT THE WORK HE'S  
DONE WITH YOU--  
AMAZING!



...I THOUGHT I KNEW  
BURSTEIN. WHAT HE  
THOUGHT OF ME.

I BELIEVED  
IN HIM.



I BELIEVED HIM WHEN  
HE SAID I WAS LIKE A  
SON TO HIM.



I BELIEVED IT  
WHEN HE SAID  
I WAS SPECIAL.



NOW I DON'T  
KNOW WHAT TO  
BELIEVE--ABOUT  
NOAH BURSTEIN...



...OR ABOUT  
MYSELF.

I THOUGHT  
YOU WERE  
DEAD, NOAH.  
I NEED TO  
KNOW...WHAT  
ARE YOU DOING  
HERE?



# THE HOME OF MATEO CORELLO.

MAN, WHAT WE DOIN' HERE?

WE PUTTIN' IN WORK, SON.

PUTTIN' IN WORK? MAN, WE JUST CLEANIN' UP A MESS FOR MR. MORGAN. AND WE REALLY GONNA KILL LUKE CAGE AND WARHAWK?

MAYBE.

MAYBE NOT.

MR. FILTHY-RICH-MONEYBAGS SAY WE DO THIS. WE IN BIDNESS WIT' HIM, RIGHT, KEV?

YEAH, MR. FILTHY-RICH-MONEYBAGS BE SAYIN' LOTTA THINGS, RAY. THE KEY IS UNDERSTANDIN' WHAT HE REALLY MEANS. HE AIN'T LOOKIN' TO DO BIDNESS WIT' US...

...HE LOOKIN' TO OWN SOME NEGROES TO DO HIS DIRTY WORK. THESE ITALIANS MESSED IT UP, SO HE'S MOVING DOWN THE FOOD CHAIN.

WE GETTIN' PAID, FO' SHO...

...BUT HE OWN US WITH THAT MONEY. FEEL ME?

BUT WE GOT STRENGTH, YO. MAN, YOU AIN'T EVEN GOT THE CRAZINESS. THAT GOTTA MEAN SOMETHING.

DON'T MEAN #\$\$%. REST OF Y'ALL GOT THE CRAZINESS, THANKS TO DR. B AND HIS MAD-SCIENTIST ASS.

MR. FILTHY-RICH-MONEYBAGS GIVE US MAD PAPER TO CLEAN UP HIS MESS FOR HIM--TO KILL FOR HIM-- BUT HE AIN'T GIVE US NO CURE FOR THE CRAZINESS.

THAT MAKES US SLAVES TWO TIMES OVER--AND I AIN'T LOOKIN' TO BE A SLAVE.

KASLAAAM







## THE ESTATE OF CYRIL MORGAN.

IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY, THEN SAY IT.

I WARNED YOU WHEN YOU FIRST CAME TO ME WITH YOUR PROPOSITION THAT IT WAS RISKY...

...NOAH BURSTEIN AND HIS EXPERIMENTS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN PROBLEMATIC, TO SAY THE LEAST.

"I TOLD YA SO." THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?

I WOULD'VE EXPECTED SOMETHING MUCH MORE ELOQUENT.

YOUR ABILITY TO BE FLIPPANT IN THE FACE OF OVERWHELMING INEPTITUDE IS ALMOST CHARMING, MR. MORGAN.

INEPTITUDE? YOU CAN KISS MY INEPT ASS.

BURSTEIN IS BEING DEALT WITH. CORELLO AND HIS CREW HAVE **BEEN** DEALT WITH.

EVEN THE MESS CORELLO MADE--I'M DEALING WITH ALL OF IT.

AND AS FAR AS BURSTEIN'S EXPERIMENTS GO--THOSE THUGS IN THE NINTH WARD MAFIA--I'M TAKING CARE OF THEM, TOO.

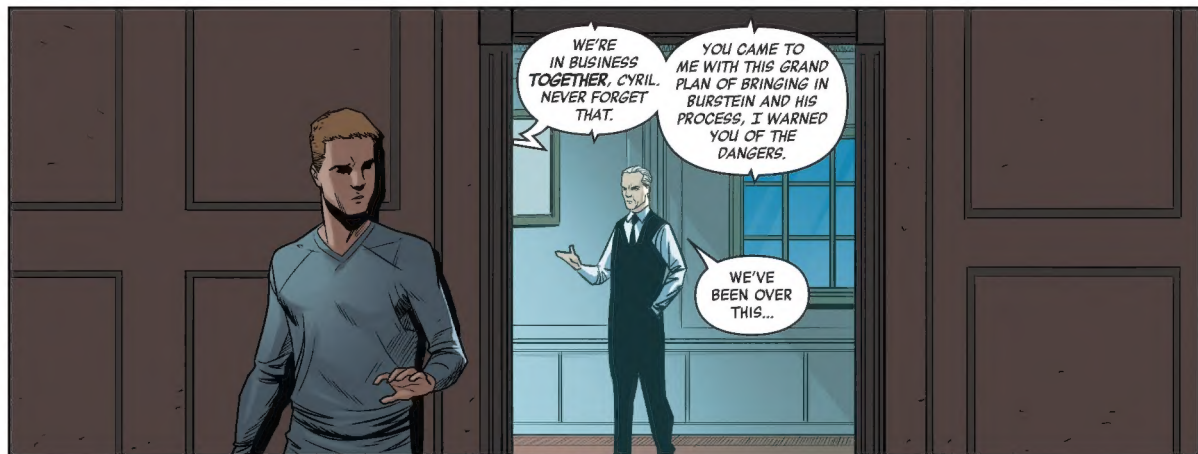
EVERYONE WANTS TO PLAY GOD, MR. MORGAN, BUT MOST JUST END UP BEING THE DEVIL.

WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

BURNING MATEO CORELLO'S ORGANIZATION TO THE GROUND IS NOT TAKING CARE OF ANYTHING. IT'S JUST CREATING MORE PROBLEMS.

ARE YOU TELLING ME HOW TO RUN MY BUSINESS?





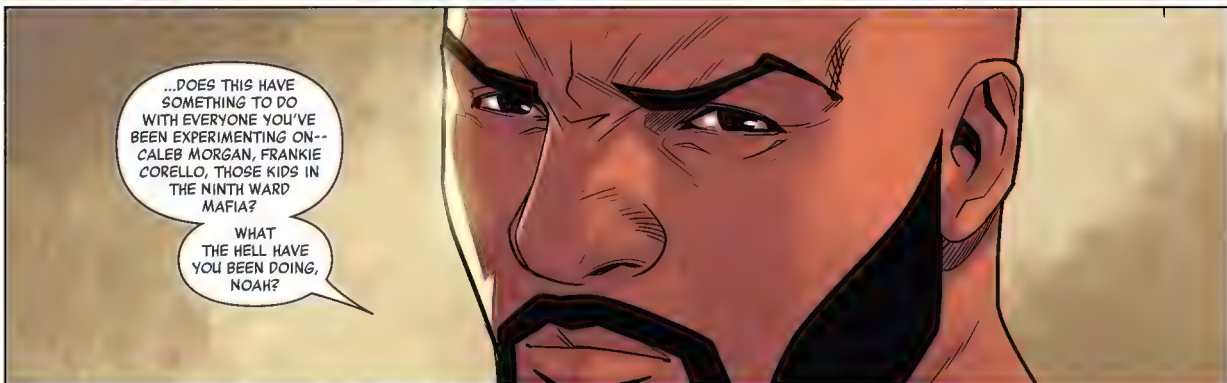




I HAVE NEVER BEEN ANYTHING BUT HONEST WITH YOU, LUKE. FRANKLY, I RESENT THE INSULTATION OF ANYTHING TO THE CONTRARY.

FRANKLY, I DON'T GIVE A DAMN.

SOMEONE FAKED YOUR DEATH FOR A REASON. I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER...



...DOES THIS HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH EVERYONE YOU'VE BEEN EXPERIMENTING ON-- CALES MORGAN, FRANKIE CORELLO, THOSE KIDS IN THE NINTH WARD MAFIA?

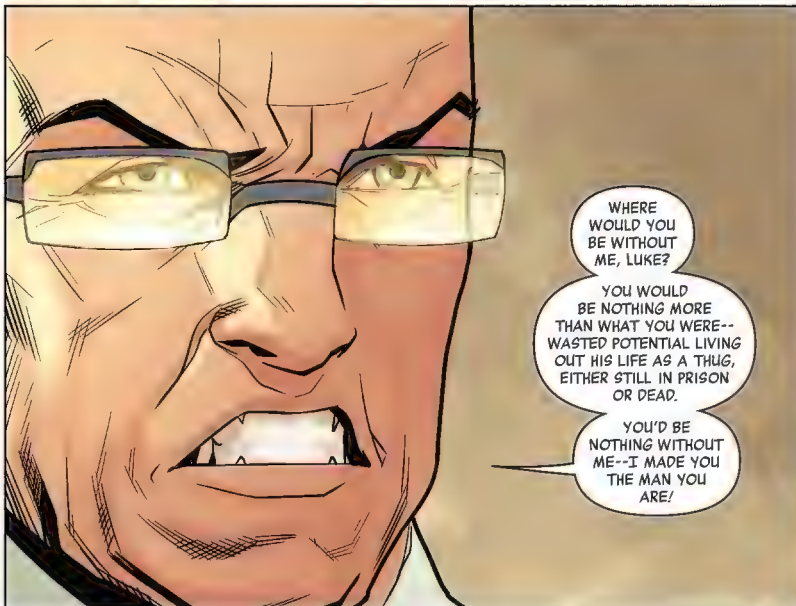
WHAT THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN DOING, NOAH?



YOU'RE NOT SEEING THE BIG PICTURE, LUKE.

I SEE ENOUGH OF THE PICTURE TO KNOW EITHER YOU'RE NOT TELLING THE WHOLE TRUTH, OR YOU'RE STRAIGHT-UP LYING.

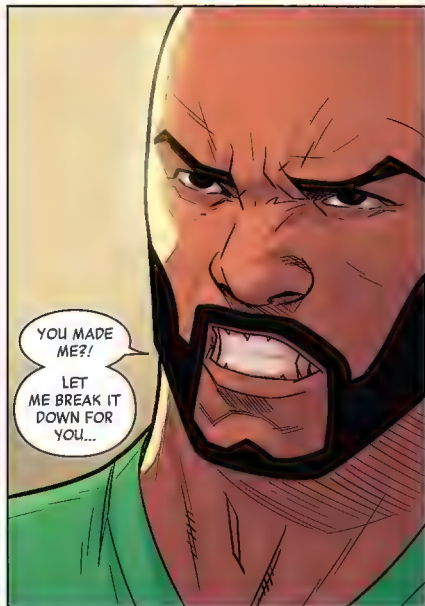
WHO ARE YOU TO TALK TO ME LIKE THAT?!



WHERE WOULD YOU BE WITHOUT ME, LUKE?

YOU WOULD BE NOTHING MORE THAN WHAT YOU WERE-- WASTED POTENTIAL LIVING OUT HIS LIFE AS A THUG, EITHER STILL IN PRISON OR DEAD.

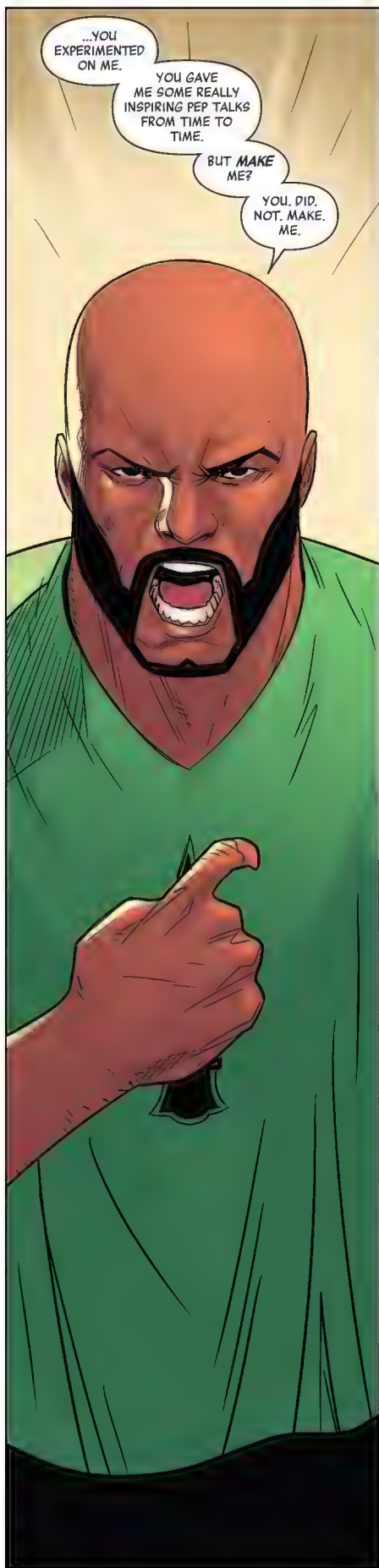
YOU'D BE NOTHING WITHOUT ME-- I MADE YOU THE MAN YOU ARE!



YOU MADE ME?!

LET ME BREAK IT DOWN FOR YOU...





...YOU EXPERIMENTED ON ME.

YOU GAVE ME SOME REALLY INSPIRING PEP TALKS FROM TIME TO TIME.

BUT MAKE ME?

YOU. DID. NOT. MAKE. ME.



"I MADE MYSELF.

"RIGHT OR WRONG-- EVERYTHING I DID WAS BECAUSE I CHOSE TO DO IT.



"I'LL GIVE YOU CREDIT FOR THE EXPERIMENT AND WHAT THAT DID TO ME...

"...BUT WHAT I DID WITH MYSELF, WHAT I DID WITH MY LIFE...

"...THAT WAS ME.



"I NEVER ASKED FOR THESE SUPER-POWERS, BUT I'VE DONE THE BEST I COULD WITH 'EM.

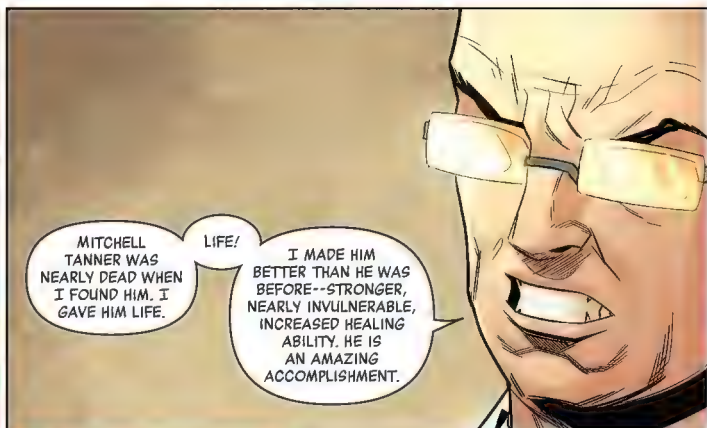
"HATE TO SAY IT THIS WAY..."





...BUT IF YOU WANT CREDIT FOR MAKING ANYONE INTO SOMETHING MORE THAN THEY WERE...

...IT'S TIME YOU TOOK RESPONSIBILITY FOR POOR OLD TANNER HERE.



MITCHELL TANNER WAS NEARLY DEAD WHEN I FOUND HIM. I GAVE HIM LIFE.

LIFE!

I MADE HIM BETTER THAN HE WAS BEFORE--STRONGER, NEARLY INVULNERABLE, INCREASED HEALING ABILITY. HE IS AN AMAZING ACCOMPLISHMENT.



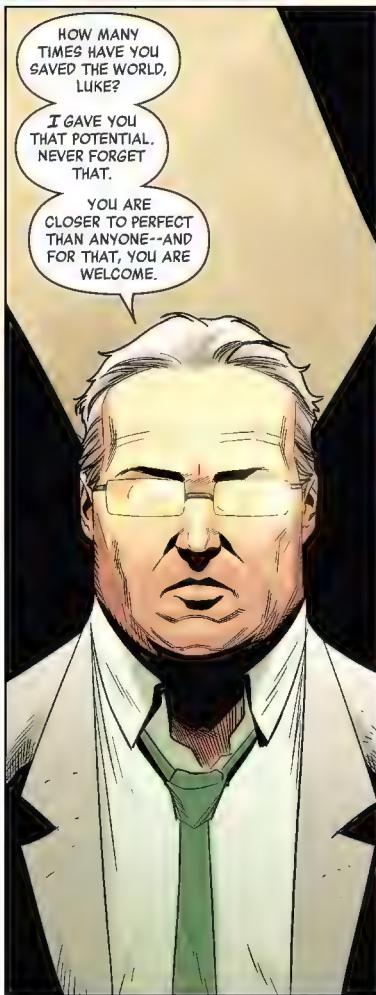
AND HE'S A CRAZED KILLER THAT CAN'T CONTROL HIS RAGE. HOW MANY PEOPLE HAS HE MURDERED? DOZENS? HUNDREDS? MORE?

HOW IS THAT MAKING HIS LIFE BETTER?



HE IS THE **POTENTIAL** OF SOMETHING BETTER, AND THAT MAKES HIM BETTER.

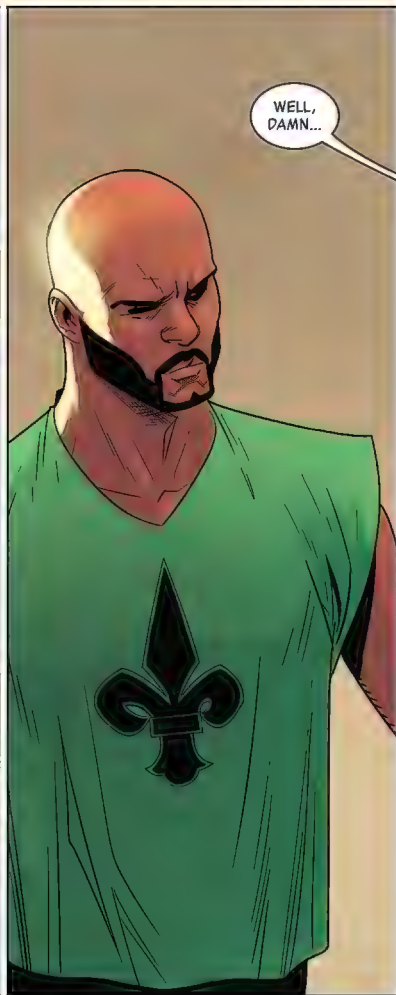
IN THAT WAY, HE'S NOT DIFFERENT THAN YOU.



HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU SAVED THE WORLD, LUKE?

I GAVE YOU THAT **POTENTIAL**. NEVER FORGET THAT.

YOU ARE CLOSER TO PERFECT THAN ANYONE--AND FOR THAT, YOU ARE WELCOME.



WELL, DAMN...

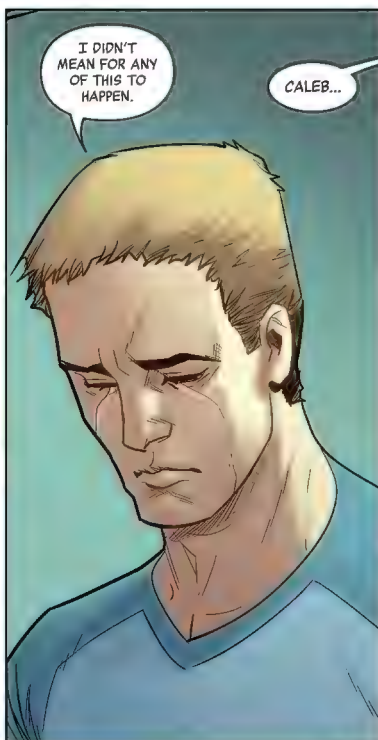








I'M SORRY.



I DIDN'T MEAN FOR ANY OF THIS TO HAPPEN.

CALEB...



...YOU REMEMBER TO TAKE YOUR MEDICINE?

NO, SIR. NOT YET.

GOTTA REMEMBER, SON...



...YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DON'T TAKE IT.

I KNOW.

WE NEED TO TALK. IT'S IMPORTANT.

I KNOW.



BURSTEIN IS MISSING. SOMEONE LET HIM OUT.

DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT?



I KNOW...I KNOW THAT I CAN'T HAVE ANY MORE PEOPLE HURT...





"...ANY MORE PEOPLE DYING BECAUSE OF ME."

WHAT ABOUT THE POLICE?

EVERYTHING HAS BEEN ARRANGED--YOU'LL GET NO PROBLEMS FROM THE POLICE.

THE TARGET KNOWN AS WARHAWK IS INJURED--THE EXTENT OF THE INJURIES IS UNCLEAR. THINK OF HIM AS A WOUNDED ANIMAL.

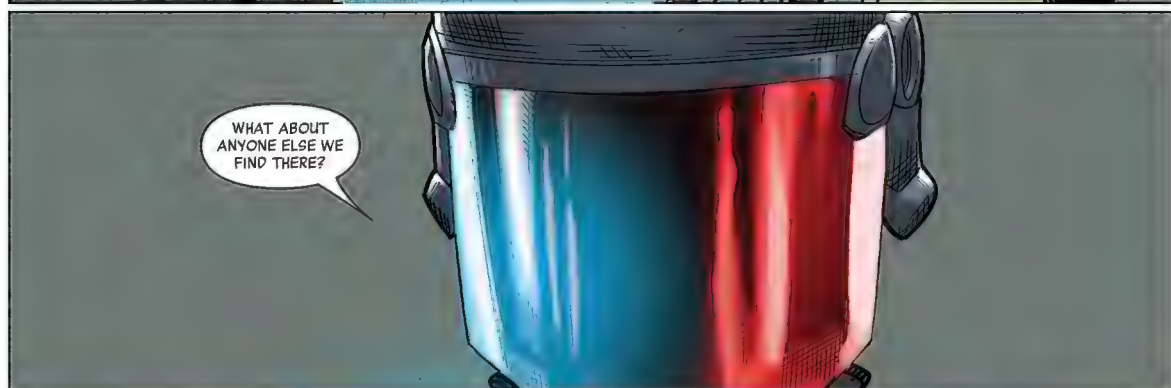


LUKE CAGE IS FORMIDABLE. HE WILL NOT GO DOWN WITHOUT A FIGHT.

YOU WANT THEM DEAD OR ALIVE?

DEAD. BUT I WANT THE BODIES. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CAN HARVEST THEIR ORGANS AND DNA. WE MAY STILL COME OUT OF THIS WITH A WIN.

COPY THAT.



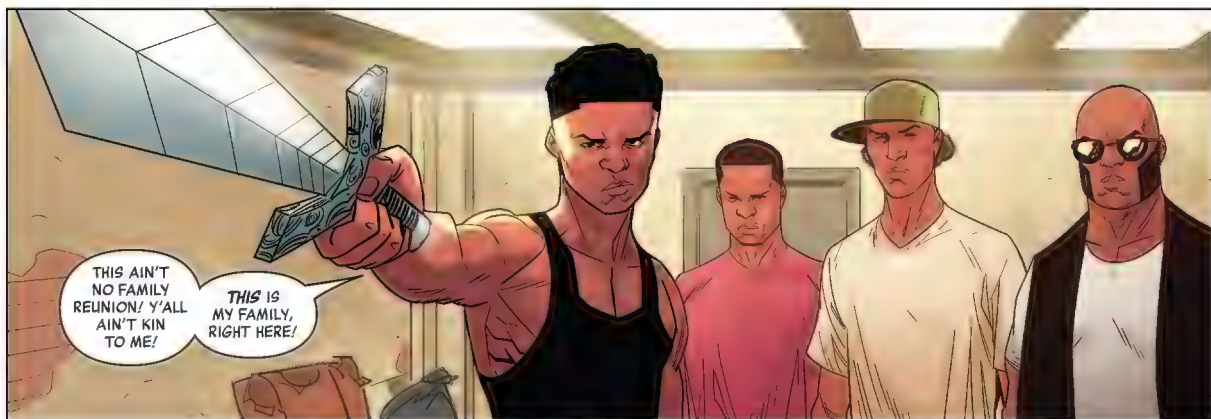
WHAT ABOUT ANYONE ELSE WE FIND THERE?



NO WITNESSES. NO SURVIVORS.

YOU GOT IT. KILL 'EM ALL AND LET RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SORT 'EM OUT.





THIS AIN'T  
NO FAMILY  
REUNION! Y'ALL  
AIN'T KIN  
TO ME!

THIS IS  
MY FAMILY,  
RIGHT HERE!



BABY  
BROTHER SEEMS  
PISSED OFF.

YOU  
THINK?



KEVIN,  
MY DEAR  
BOY...

I AIN'T  
YOUR BOY,  
BURSTEIN!

I AIN'T  
NOTHIN' TO  
YOU BUT A  
DAMN SCIENCE  
PROJECT...



"...WOULD'VE BEEN BETTER  
OFF IF I'D BLED TO DEATH  
IN THE STREETS.

"COMIN' TO YOUR CLINIC  
WAS MAKIN' A DEAL WITH  
THE DEVIL."



HOW CAN  
YOU SAY THAT?  
I SAVED YOUR LIFE--  
MADE YOU BETTER  
THAN YOU WERE  
BEFORE.

YOU'RE LIKE  
A SON TO ME--  
ALL OF YOU ARE  
LIKE SONS  
TO ME.



YOU  
SAY THAT  
A LOT.









IT ESCALATES QUICKLY.

STAY BEHIND ME--I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS.

LUKE, BE CAREFUL!

PTING PTING



THE OTHERS ARE BULLETPROOF...

PTING PTING PTING



...BUT NOT EVERYONE IS INVULNERABLE.

WE HAVE TO HELP LUKE!

WE HAVE TO STAY ALIVE!



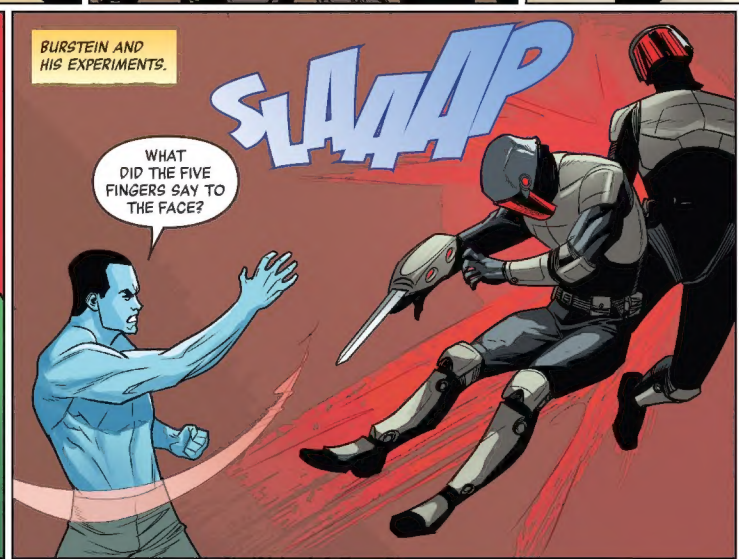
KEVLAR, THEY GOT THE BLADES! THEY-- ARGH!

I SEE THE FIRST ONE DIE, AND MY HEART SINKS.



IT NEVER SHOULD'VE COME TO THIS.

WATCH OUT FOR THE BLADES!



BURSTEIN AND HIS EXPERIMENTS.

WHAT DID THE FIVE FINGERS SAY TO THE FACE?



BURSTEIN. I STILL THINK OF HIS SAFETY...

WARHAWK! STOP MESSIN' AROUND AND GET BURSTEIN AND LENORE OUT OF HERE! NOW!



...EVEN THOUGH THIS IS ALL BECAUSE OF HIM.

I'LL DRIVE!

THESE GUYS LEFT THE ENGINE RUNNING... AMATEURS.



IN SECONDS THE NINTH WARD MAFIA ARE BUTCHERED--HACKED TO PIECES BY PROFESSIONAL KILLERS, UNTIL THERE'S ONLY ONE LEFT STANDING.

LOOK OUT, KID!



I SEE MYSELF AS A YOUNG MAN.

BACK OFF, OLD MAN!



I CAN'T LET HIM DIE--TOO MANY ALREADY HAVE.

DON'T BE A FOOL! THAT BLADE CAN...



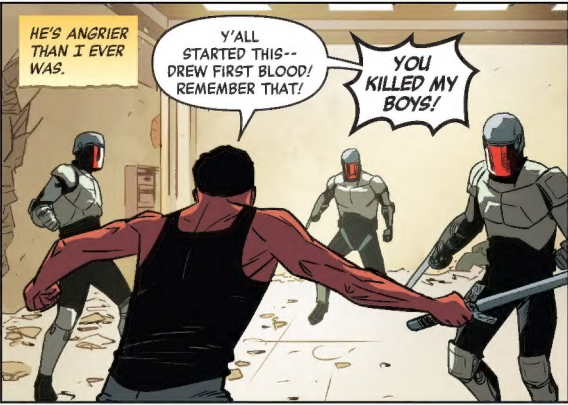
I'M TELLING YOU...

...THIS ONE'S ON ME.

I WAS WRONG.

WASN'T EXPECTING THAT...







# POWER MAIL

Send us your letters at [mheroes@marvel.com](mailto:mheroes@marvel.com) and mark them "okay to print"!

I have been a super hero fan for a long time, but only recently started reading comics. I started with SPIDER-MAN and THE AVENGERS, which were great. However, after a while, I started looking for African American super heroes that represented me. When I first heard of Luke Cage I was a little skeptical, like, "His powers aren't even cool." Then I decided that I would try him out. It was one of, if not THE, best decisions that I have ever made with reading comic books. I read the first issue and almost went ballistic. The story is so amazing and feels real-like I can look outside and see this happening (which would be crazy awesome if that did happen). I am looking forward to seeing how this story plays out and I'm loving every second of it!!! So thank you so much for such an amazing character and story!

Joshua Shumpert-Williams

**I'm glad you decided to give LUKE CAGE a try. Like you, I was looking for super heroes that represented me when I first discovered Luke (a very long time ago). It's an honor to be part of his legacy, and helping create his adventures for new fans. Thank you.**

I have been following Luke Cage since I was 16 years old, when he was first introduced in 1972. I love the more serious take on the character with this series than what was presented by David F. Walker in the recently ended POWER MAN AND IRON FIST series. There's a good blend and balance of story/character development and action. I think the art really works with the crime noir tone. And more importantly, I am most impressed with the more measured and contemplative, but no less cool, persona Luke presents. This, in my opinion, is one of the best characterizations of Luke Cage in his 45 years of existence. This is certainly up there with Mary Jo Duffy, Marc McLaurin and Brian Bendis. The book is a definite winner.

Wil Condry

**You have placed me in some great company. Now I feel the pressure to really deliver the goods. Luke is one of my favorite characters, and exploring the many facets of his personality has been quite splendid.**

Thanks for printing my letter in issue #2. I love that David makes time to answer the letters page and talk about his fine taste in music. Marvin Gaye is my favorite Motown artist; *What's Going On* is in my top five albums of all time. It's clear that David has an in-depth knowledge of Marvin because he mentions the *Trouble Man* soundtrack. What a terrible split-screen LP cover, but incredible music.

David is really connecting with old-time fans by going back to Luke's origin, but the comic is also accessible to first-timers. Nice art by Nelson and Marcio. Photo-realistic cover by Rahzzah pops off the new-comics shelf.

Bruce Marsh  
QNS KOF TTB  
Newbury Park  
England

**The soundtrack to *Trouble Man* is one of Marvin Gaye's greatest accomplishments. He was unhappy with the soundtrack he originally recorded for the film, so he went back and rerecorded and arranged all the songs for the album. If you watch the movie, none of the songs sound the same as the album. That's your history lesson for the day.**

I just finished issue #2 of LUKE CAGE and, Sweet Christmas, this series has me hooked already! David F. Walker's writing is superb and his childhood devotion to this character exudes through every page. I'm a new fan of Luke Cage, I have to be honest, who was introduced to the character through the Netflix shows, beginning with *Jessica Jones*. My perception of this character is heavenly influenced by Mike Colter's portrayal. David F. Walker and Nelson Blake II's great work is bringing that perception to comic book life

for a new fan like me! Keep up the truly great work on this title, gentlemen! Luke Cage is in capable and quite "powerful" hands with this creative team. That's a bulletproof fact.

Adam

**Honestly, I never thought I'd live to see a live-action Luke Cage, let alone one as cool as portrayed by Mike Colter. He's quite dreamy.**

Hello, David, Nelson and team,

After only two issues, LUKE CAGE has become one of my favorite Marvel ongoing. Cage has been one of my all-time favorite characters for some time—thank you for producing such a quality title. I love the old-school feel of Dr. Burstein and Mitchell Tanner in this new series. Introducing these new characters with power sets like Luke's and Mitchell's is also a wonderful addition. Issue #3 can't get here fast enough!

Thank you to everyone involved with this book!  
Jake Edwards

P.S. I second keeping Rahzzah on covers until the end of time.

**Oh, if you like what's happening with Dr. Burstein and Mitchell Tanner, just wait, 'cause it gets better. Thank you for the encouraging words. We'll do our best to keep things entertaining.**

David F. Walker

